

## **THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SIBLING RESPONSIBILITY**

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Family roles, especially sibling relationships, play a vital role in the development of a person's personality. Through interactions between siblings — that is, brothers and sisters — many social and psychological qualities are formed. One of the most important aspects of these relationships is the sense of responsibility. The formation of a sense of responsibility among children directly influences their relationships with each other, their personal development, and their integration into society. Sibling responsibility refers to a child's feeling of social, emotional, and psychological care, support, and accountability toward their younger or older siblings. This article presents a theoretical and practical analysis of how sibling responsibility affects children's personal development, social adaptation, and mental stability. In psychological literature, positive forms of sibling responsibility are often associated with emotional closeness, mutual support, and cooperation. A responsible sibling provides not only physical but also emotional support to their brother or sister. Such warm relationships strengthen empathy, compassion, and the ability to compromise. For example, when an older sibling pays attention to the problems of a younger one and tries to understand them, it enhances the younger child's sense of social trust, self-confidence, and psychological security. This also positively affects school performance. The ability to work in groups, build strong friendships, and resolve conflicts constructively is strengthened. Moreover, positive sibling responsibility lays the groundwork for the development of mature and socially responsible individuals in society. Psychological research shows that individuals who felt responsible for their siblings during childhood tend to possess stronger leadership skills, greater empathy, and heightened social awareness in adulthood. However, the sense of responsibility does not always develop in a healthy manner. If it arises due to excessive pressure, obligation, or injustice, it can lead to psychological stress, feelings of guilt, dissatisfaction, or emotional exhaustion. Older children especially may become prone to burnout, perfectionism, and anxiety disorders due to constant demands to "take responsibility." Additionally, parenting styles based on constant sibling rivalry, jealousy, or comparison can cause emotional distance, hostility, and psychological alienation between children. If a younger sibling feels less valued than an older one, this can lead to low self-esteem, inner dissatisfaction, and lack of self-confidence. Long-term effects of negative sibling relationships include: -Depression and anxiety disorders -Habitual comparison with others -Social withdrawal and isolation -Internal aggression or passivity -Internal conflicts and personal crises Sibling relationships and the sense of responsibility formed through them have been studied through several psychological theories. For instance, Alfred Adler's birth order theory highlights the role of sibling positions and parental expectations. According to Adler, the firstborn is typically shaped as "responsible" and "perfectionist," due to greater parental expectations. He emphasizes that this can result in psychological pressure on the older child. Adler's theory provides an important framework for understanding sibling dynamics. Soviet psychologist Igor Kon, in his work "Personality Development and Socialization", states: "Adolescents learn the sense of responsibility in practice by

taking care of their siblings, which stabilizes their self-concept.” He views these relationships as part of social role-taking and identification processes, where children test their future social roles through interactions with siblings. These ideas affirm the educational and psycho-pedagogical importance of sibling responsibility in personal development. Recent empirical studies also confirm a direct link between sibling responsibility and psychological well-being. For example, in a 2018 study by Russian psychologist L. I. Bozhenova, it was found that children with a strong sense of sibling responsibility tend to be more resilient to stress, better socially adapted, and more capable of peaceful conflict resolution. In contrast, forced responsibility or irrational parental expectations often lead to anxiety, depressive moods, and emotional detachment. These findings support the need to identify healthy mechanisms for the development of sibling responsibility. The impact of sibling responsibility — whether positive or negative — largely depends on parenting styles. According to Baumrind’s classification, children raised in authoritative parenting environments tend to be both emotionally stable and responsible toward their siblings. In contrast, authoritarian or neglectful styles are associated with more frequent sibling conflicts. Empirical observations suggest that mutual support, cooperation, and equality in sibling relationships are closely linked to the psychological climate of the family. Equal and sincere interactions help transform responsibility into a natural, positive experience. Sibling responsibility has a profound impact on forming stable, socially adapted, and emotionally healthy individuals. When shaped through positive relationships, responsibility fosters empathy, collaboration, friendly communication, and successful social integration. On the contrary, negative sibling experiences — such as rivalry, injustice, excessive pressure, and neglect — can lead to psychological discomfort, anxiety, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal. Therefore, psychologists, educators, and parents must take a conscious approach to foster positive sibling responsibility, promoting emotional awareness and equality among children to create a healthy family environment.

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